

Who are the Heirs of the Hebrew Bible? Sephardic Visual Historiography in a Christian Context

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Abstract

The sumptuous Sephardic haggadot produced in the fourteenth century include a prefatory cycle of full-page miniatures depicting events from the book of Exodus, sometimes with additional episodes from Genesis. Scenes depicting preparations for the feast and the ritual ceremony of Passover were placed at the end of the biblical episodes. This paper considers the cycles as historiographical sequences, beginning in the biblical past and concluding with fourteenth century Jews celebrating the Passover. As I shall argue, these sequences may have been designed as a response to anti-Jewish polemic, in a local version defined by the Catalan Dominican friar Raymond Martin. By comparing the Hebrew examples to Christian devotional books, we shall show how despite their polemical intention, these cycles also point to the deep integration of the Jewish designers and patrons within local Christian culture and society.

Keywords

Haggadah, illumination, visual historiography, Christian–Jewish debate

The fourteenth century Sephardic haggadot are among the most famous of Hebrew illuminated manuscripts that have been discussed in the scholarly literature.¹ While there are individual divergences in text, style, iconography

¹ Since the publication of the Sarajevo Haggadah by David Heinrich Müller and Julius von Schlosser, *Die Haggadah von Sarajevo: Eine spanisch-jüdische Bilderhandschrift des Mittelalters* (Vienna: Alfred Holder, 1898), the Sephardic haggadot have received much attention in the scholarly world. Bezalel Narkiss laid the foundations for systematic study in his monograph on the Golden Haggadah, *The Golden Haggadah: A Fourteenth-Century Illuminated Hebrew Manuscript in the British Museum* (London: Eugrammia Press, 1970) and later in his *Catalogue Raisonné*, in which he collaborated with Aliza Cohen-Mushlin and

and selection of illustrations, most of the manuscripts belong to the same tradition developed in different versions according to the intentions and tastes of the patrons and designers of each manuscript. These sumptuous productions usually include a prefatory cycle of full-page miniatures which represent events from the book of Exodus, sometimes with additional episodes from Genesis. Scenes depicting preparations for the feast and the ritual ceremony were placed at the end of the biblical cycle. Unlike the biblical images, which have received much attention, the ceremonial depictions have hardly been discussed.² Analysis of these scenes may enable us to reconstruct some aspects of Jewish daily life during the season of Passover in medieval Aragón and Catalonia, the geo-cultural area where most of the Sephardic haggadot were produced. The illustrations show various tasks involved in the preparation of the feast, such as purifying dishes, cleaning the house and searching for the leaven (Fig. 1). They also show the different stages of the ritual performed on Passover eve, such as the recitation of the haggadah text, the drinking of wine, the eating of the *mazzot* (unleavened bread), or the hiding of the *afikoman* (a piece of mazzah hidden at the start of the Seder and eaten at the end of the meal).³ Although

Anat Tcherikover, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts in the British Isles*, vol. I: Spanish and Portuguese Manuscripts (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities and London: British Academy, 1982). Recently, Katrin Kogman-Appel, *Illuminating Haggadot from Medieval Spain: Biblical Imagery and the Passover Holiday* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2006), dedicated a comprehensive study to seven manuscripts. For further bibliography, see Kogman-Appel.

² For a brief references see Evelyn Cohen, “The Decoration,” in *The Barcelona Haggadah: An Illuminated Passover Compendium from 14th-century Catalonia in Facsimile*, ed. Jeremy Schonfield (London: Facsimile Editions, 1992), 24–43; Julie A. Harris, “Good Jews, Bad Jews, and No Jews At All: Ritual Imagery and Social Standards in the Catalan Haggadot,” in *Church, State, Vellum, and Stone: Essays on Medieval Spain in Honor of John Williams*, ed. Therese Martin and Julie A. Harris (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 275–296 (277–278). No scholar has treated the customs in detail or analyzed their relation to contemporary halakhic literature.

³ For ritual scenes included in the prefatory cycle see London, BL, Or. 2737 (Castile or South France?), late thirteenth century, fols. 87r–91v: preparing the dough for the *mazzot*, baking the *mazzot*, making the *haroset* (the blend of fruits and nuts symbolizing the mortar which the people of Israel used in Egypt for their forced labor), distributing *haroset*, distributing *mazzot*, purifying dishes in a ritual bath, cooking, the Seder table, roasting of the lamb; the Golden Haggadah, London, BL, Add. 27210, Barcelona, 1320s, fol. 15r: distributing *mazzot* and *haroset* to the children, searching for the leaven, cleaning the house, slaughtering and skinning the lamb, purifying dishes in boiling water (see Narkiss, *British Isles*, Cat. No. 9); the Sister Haggadah, Catalonia, 1320s, London, BL, Or. 2884, fols. 17r–18r:

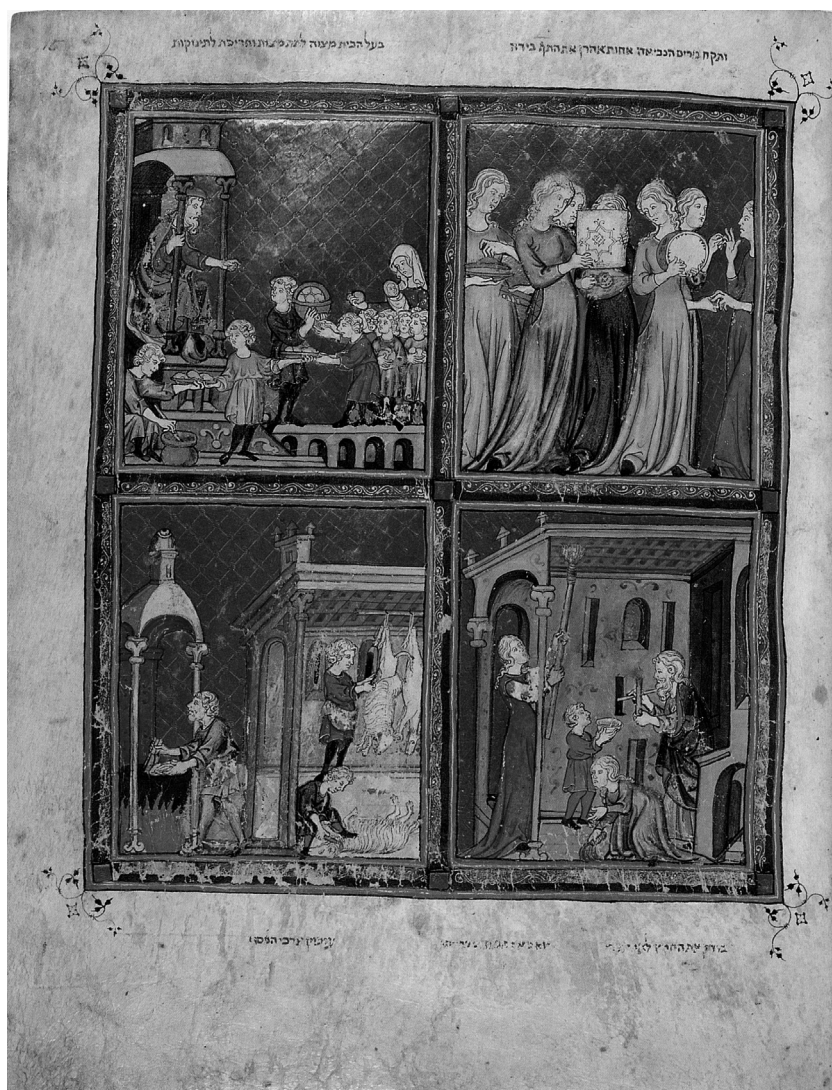


Figure 1. Dance of Miriam and the daughters of Israel (Exodus 15: 20-21)/The master of the house orders *mazzot* and *haroset* to the children/ Cleaning of the house and searching for leaven/Purifying dishes and preparing the lamb; Golden Haggadah, Barcelona, 1320s, London, BL, Add. 27210, fol. 15r.

the haggadot were produced in a single geo-cultural area, data from different manuscripts expose the diversity of customs among communities situated not far from each other. The scenes are characterized by an aura of authenticity and faithfulness to actual practice. The artists usually did not follow a model or any established visual precedent in designing these scenes, but based themselves on their own habits as these were expressed in reality, in their families or community.⁴ This individualistic aspect not only

distributing *mazzot* and *haroset*, searching for the leaven, cleaning the house, reciting the haggadah in the synagogue, the Seder ceremony. See *ibid.*, Figs 99–100, 137, 187, 188. For other examples, see below in the main text. Other haggadot represent ritual scenes as text illustrations; see, for example, London, Add. 14761, with numerous examples, such as reclining (fol. 19v) and hiding the *afikoman* in the table map (fol. 20v). See Cohen, “The Decoration”, 26.

⁴ A detailed discussion of the rituals would require a study of its own, which is beyond the scope of this paper. However, since this aspect has not been extensively treated in the literature, I will note one example, the custom of reclining. In the Roman period—the time when the custom of reclining was adopted at the Passover feast as a sign of freedom—royal persons and aristocrats used to recline during banquets, each on his own couch. According to the Babylonian Talmud, reclining on the left side was an obligatory for eating the *mazzah* and drinking the cups of wine during the Seder ceremony. See *The Babylonian Talmud*, ed. Isidore Epstein, 27 vols (London: Soncino, 1935–1948), *Pesahim* 108a, 560–561). For Maimonides (1135, Cordoba–1204, Fostat), who wrote in an eastern cultural environment where similar gestures were still current, preserving the original form of reclining “as the kings and respected people eat” was rather natural (commentary to the Mishnah, 10, 1). However, in medieval Europe, when reclining was no more in vogue in royal courts, the custom had lost its meaning. Furthermore, since sitting around a table was now the normal way of dining, the posture of reclining even became inconvenient. As a result variations developed. In the twelfth century one of the earliest *Tosafists*, Rabbi Eliezer ben Nathan (*Ra’aven*; 1090–1170) tended to tolerate those who do not recline, and his grandson, Rabbi Eliezer ben Joel ha-Levi of Bonn (*Ra’avyah*, d. 1225) explicitly canceled the custom altogether. See Menahem M. Kasher, *Haggadah Shelemah* (Jerusalem: Beth Torah Shelemah, 1961), 69 (Hebrew). This opinion was reiterated by Rabbi Jacob ben Asher (1270–ca. 1340) in his halakhic treatise *Arba’ah Turim*, composed in Spain around the time of the haggadot. Being the son of the Ashkenazi scholar Asher ben Jehiel who immigrated to Toledo around 1304, he was well acquainted with Ashkenazi customs, though he himself chose another direction, preserving the leaning to the left. The different views were most probably known in the region of Catalonia, where the Ashkenazi influence was especially felt. While the written sources reflect the attitudes of the rabbinic authorities, the illustrations produced in this region can be regarded as testimonies to the various real practices. Whereas the Rylands Haggadah (Manchester, John Rylands Library, Heb. 6, fol. 21v; *The Rylands Haggadah: A Medieval Sephardi Masterpiece in Facsimile*, ed. Raphael Loewe (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988)) preserves the conservative attitude towards leaning, the Sarajevo (Sarajevo National Museum, f. 64v) and the London Add. 14761 (fol. 19v, The

enables us to bring to life anonymous figures celebrating the Passover in fourteenth century Aragón and Catalonia, but manifests the designers' intention to be as accurate as possible in documenting their own community's preparation and celebration of the traditional feast. Moreover, the importance assigned to these images can be deduced from their location as part of the preceding cycle and as a continuation of the narrative sequence (Fig. 1). In this sense, it could be inferred that the designers endow the contemporary ritual scenes with a status equal to that of biblical events. This equivalence demonstrates the important role of the ritual scenes in designing the message of the whole cycle.

In her recent book on seven of the Sephardic haggadot, Katrin Kogman-Appel defines the biblical cycles as a vehicle intended to arouse historical consciousness through traditional midrashic interpretation and avoidance of Christian typology. She discusses the cycles in light of scholarly struggles within Sephardic society, and identifies the patrons and designers of the haggadot as scholars and preachers who revived midrashic traditions as a polemic response to allegorical interpretations of the Bible. Such allegorical commentaries flourished at that time among circles supporting the rationalist attitude of Maimonides.⁵ I would like to highlight another aspect of the cycles, considering not only the biblical scenes but also the ritual episodes, taking them together as historiographical sequences which begin in the biblical past and conclude with the fourteenth century Jewry visualized at the end. As I shall argue, these sequences carry a polemic intention directed towards the Sephardic community's Christian surroundings. The purpose of this essay is not to analyze in detail the iconography

Barcelona Haggadah, ed. Schonfield) seem to combine different views rather than reflect a specific written source or a halakhic definition. Both the Sarajevo and Add. 14761 renounce the couch and adjust the custom to the dining habits of their time. The Sarajevo version stays closer to the original posture by keeping the pillow which is here placed on the table while the act of reclining is performed by leaning towards it. The version found in BL Add. 14761 goes a step further. It drops the pillow and replaces the act of reclining by a leaning on the elbow, an original solution for people who did not wish to abolish the custom altogether, but to preserve it in a symbolic way only. Cf. Rachel Wischnitzer, "Passover in Art," in: *The Passover Anthology*, ed. Philip Goodman (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1962), 301; Cohen, "The Decoration", 25–26). This symbolical option is still in use in some communities whose roots go back to pre-expulsion Spain. For some Ashkenazi examples illustrating the custom of reclining, see Katrin Kogman-Appel, *Die zweite Nürnberger und die Jehuda Haggada: jüdische Illustratoren zwischen Tradition und Fortschritt* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1999), 116–117.

⁵ Kogman-Appel, *Illuminating Haggadot*, Ch. 7.

of one scene or another, but rather to offer an over-all analysis of the sequence. The cycles of the Rylands and the so-called "Brother" Haggadot from Catalonia,⁶ and the Sarajevo Haggadah from the Crown of Aragón⁷ will exemplify the phenomenon and form the focus of my discussion.

Visual Historiography

The prefatory sequences of both the Rylands and the Brother Haggadot are very similar in terms of the selection of scenes and iconography.⁸ Although, as in other haggadot, these cycles do not directly illustrate the text of the haggadah, they echo the content of the narrative of the Jews' redemption from Egypt recounted in the text, and represent sequential scenes that parallel the biblical source. As in the Bible, the figure of Moses, deliberately omitted from the text,⁹ is the central actor. The cycle opens with

⁶ Manchester, John Rylands Library, Heb. 6 and London, BL, Or. 1404; Narkiss, *British Isles*, Cat. Nos. 15 and 16; *Rylands Haggadah*, ed. Loewe; Kogman-Appel, *Illuminating Haggadot*, 18-19, 31-33, 91-97. Narkiss relates the manuscripts to the Chronicles of Jaime el Conquistador of 1343. He dates the Rylands Haggadah to the middle and the Brother to the third quarter of the fourteenth century. Kogman-Appel suggests an earlier date and locates both in the 1330s. According to Kogman-Appel (96-97), the Brother Haggadah was the first to be decorated, while the Rylands Haggadah, illuminated in the same workshop, followed it closely.

⁷ Sarajevo, National Museum. See the two facsimile editions, *The Sarajevo Haggadah*, ed. Cecil Roth (Belgrade: Verlag Jugoslavija, 1962) and *The Sarajevo Haggadah*, ed. Eugen Werber (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1983). For the localization and dating of the manuscript see Bezalel Narkiss, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts*, Heb. rev. ed. (Jerusalem: Keter, 1984), 87; Kogman-Appel, 16, 30-31, 42-43, 99-109. The manuscript has no colophon, or any other written indications of origin and date. However, the coat of arms of the kingdom of Aragón in the upper margin of folio 37r suggests an Aragonese provenance. For the identification of the coat of arms, see Evelyn Cohen, "The Decoration," in *The Barcelona Haggadah*, ed. Schonfield, 36, 42-43. Narkiss relates the manuscript to the 1343 Chronicle of Jaime II (Barcelona, University Library), dates it to the second half of the fourteenth century and suggests its origin in Barcelona; Kogman-Appel dates it to the 1330s and suggests the region of northwestern Aragón, close to the kingdom of Navarre, as a possible provenance.

⁸ Rylands Haggadah, fols. 13v-19v; Brother Haggadah, fols. 1v-7v.

⁹ The omission of Moses from the haggadah text stressed the concept that God was directly responsible for the great miracles involved in the Exodus from Egypt. As it is written in the haggadah: "And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt: Not by means of any angel or seraph, or through the agency of the emissary. Rather the Holy One, blessed be He effected it by his own direct and glorious intervention..." On the possible polemic inten-

Moses before the burning bush,¹⁰ continues with Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh, the ten plagues,¹¹ and concludes with a representation of the nation of Israel leaving Egypt, with the Egyptians in pursuit.¹² The final biblical scene is a full-page miniature representing, according to the midrashic tradition, the Crossing of the Red Sea along two of the twelve paths intended for each tribe (Fig. 2).¹³ At the end of the biblical cycle, on the verso of the same page, two additional scenes are depicted (Figs 3 and 4).¹⁴ In the lower panel, figures seated at the Seder table carry us from the biblical era to fourteenth-century Catalonia. In both Haggadot, two rooms are presented to the viewer's gaze. In the Brother Haggadah, beneath the inscription: "Let the children of Israel also keep the Passover at his appointed season" (Numbers 9: 2), each room is occupied by a couple, who celebrate the feast with cups of wine and *mazzot*.¹⁵ A similar couple celebrating with wine, *mazzot* and sticks of *maror* is seated in the left room of the Rylands Haggadah, while, in the space to the right, an elderly bearded man is seated alone, holding a cup and a closed haggadah. In both illustrations servants offer wine.

The upper panel of the page in both Haggadot depicts episodes related to the Paschal lamb (Figs 3 and 4): the animal is slaughtered on the right; roasted on the left and the doorpost is smeared with its blood in the center. The components follow the biblical description of the preparation of the Paschal Lamb: "In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb . . . And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the

tion of the omission, see Avigdor Shinan, "Why is Moses Not Mentioned in the Passover haggadah," *Amudim* 39 (1991), 172–174 (Hebrew); Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006), 79 and n. 120.

¹⁰ Rylands Haggadah, fol. 13v; Brother Haggadah, fol. 1v.

¹¹ Rylands Haggadah, fols. 15r–18r; Brother Haggadah, fols. 3r–6r. For a full description of all the scenes, see Narkiss, *British Isles*, 88–90 and 94–97.

¹² Rylands Haggadah, fol. 18v; Brother Haggadah fol. 6v.

¹³ Rylands Haggadah, fol. 19r; Brother Haggadah fol. 7r. Concerning this iconography, based on a Jewish legend known in different versions, see Carl-Otto Nordström, "Water Miracles of Moses in Jewish Legend and Byzantine Art," *Orientalia suecana*, 7 (1958), 87–98, reprinted in *No Graven Images: Studies in art and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Joseph Gutmann (New York, NY: Ktav, c1971), 272–283; Bezalel Narkiss, "Pharaoh is Dead and Living at the Gates of Hell," *Journal of Jewish Art*, 10 (1984), 6–13.

¹⁴ Rylands Haggadah, fol. 19v; Brother Haggadah, fol. 7v.

¹⁵ The couple on the left is older, while the couple on the right is young and holds the cup of wine together, alluding to courtly art and gestures.

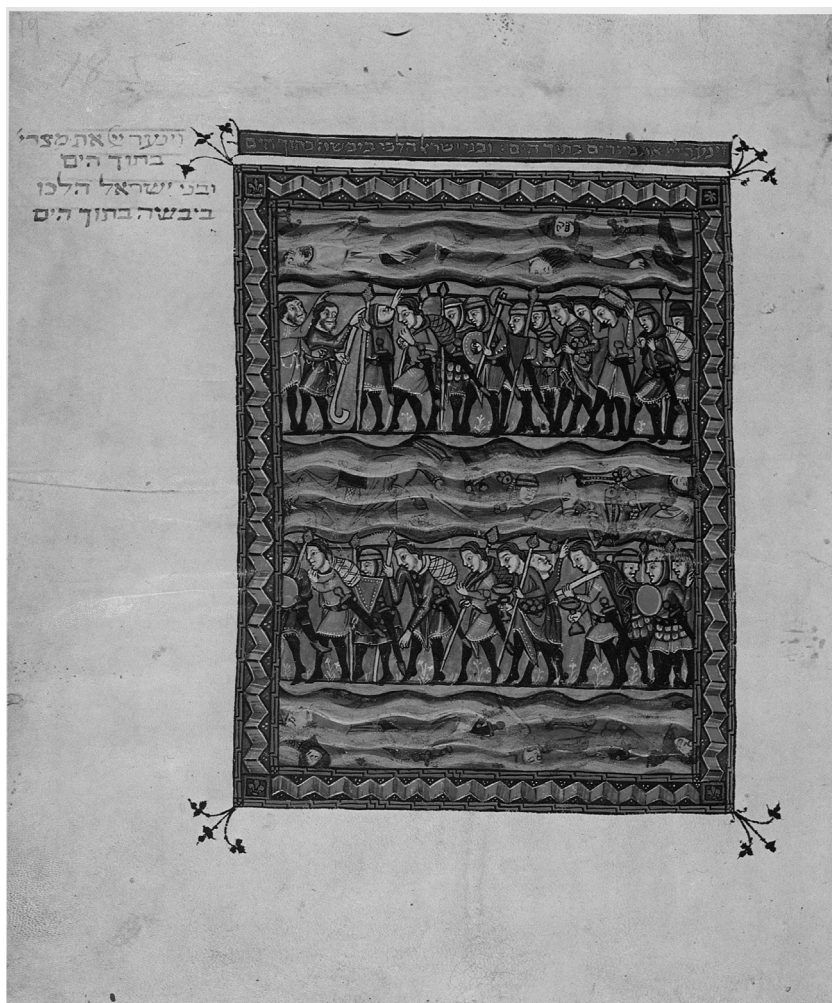


Figure 2. Crossing of the Red Sea, Rylands Haggadah, Catalonia, ca. 1330s/1340s; Manchester, John Rylands Library, Heb. 6, fol. 19r.



Figure 3. The Paschal lamb/Celebrating the *Seder*, Rylands Haggadah, fol. 19v.



Figure 4. The Paschal lamb/Celebrating the *Seder*, Brother Haggadah; London, BL, Or. 1404, fol. 7v.



Figure 5. The Paschal lamb/Celebrating the *Seder*, opening page of the text, Brother Haggadah, fol. 8r.

same month . . . And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post . . . And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire . . .” (Exodus 12: 3–8).¹⁶ The title accompanying this scene in both the Rylands and the Brother Haggadot is composed of some selections from these verses, supporting the biblical identification of the scene. However, since the panel is placed outside the biblical sequence and is attached to the celebration of the contemporary Seder, one might ask whether the lamb has any association with the reality of fourteenth-century Catalonia. The double depiction of the paschal lamb in the Brother Haggadah reinforces this probability. Here, the lamb re-appears on the opposite page in the initial words panel *atan mipirqa* (Fig. 5).¹⁷ These words open the haggadah text with the Aramaic instruction, “They are coming from the prayer gathering, rinsing a cup and pour out wine and recite the wine benediction and the Qiddush of the day.”¹⁸ In this case the Paschal Lamb and the Seder are not depicted as two separate panels one above the other, but rather merge into a continuous panel consisting of three architectonic units illustrating the Seder ceremony: the Seder table in the center is flanked by the lamb being skinned on the right and roasted

¹⁶ The smearing of the doorpost was a sign in the plague of the first born: “...and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt” (Exodus 12: 13).

¹⁷ Brother Haggadah, fol. 8r.

¹⁸ English translation after *Rylands Haggadah*, ed. Loewe, 31.

on the left. In this context, it is, thus, doubly clear that the roasted lamb is directly associated with the Seder ritual.

After the destruction of the Temple, the sages expressed some doubts concerning the eating of a roasted lamb at the Seder as a commemoration of the Paschal sacrifice, lest someone might think that people were eating holy sacrifices outside the Temple.¹⁹ There is disagreement concerning this problem in the sources, which were later summarized in Maimonides' Code of Law: "... But in all places it is forbidden to eat on Passover night a lamb roasted whole, because this would look as if one were eating the meat of a sacrifice prepared outside the Temple. If, however, the lamb is cut up, or if one of its limbs is missing, or if the lamb is whole but one limb, though still attached to the body, is still boiled instead of roasted, it may be eaten in a place where it is customary to eat roast meat."²⁰ This restricted permission suggests that in some places eating a roasted lamb on Passover was a common and accepted custom. Some Sephardic communities, including that of the designers of the Rylands and Brother Haggadot as well as of other Sephardic examples probably belonged to this category.²¹ It seems, therefore, that the image of the Paschal lamb in the two Haggadot refers simultaneously to the biblical past and the Sephardic present. The designers of the Rylands and Brother manuscripts seem to deliberately

¹⁹ For the different views, see Yosef Tabori, *The Passover Ritual Throughout the Generations* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1996), 92-105.

²⁰ Maimonides, Code of Law, Book III, *Leavened and Unleavened Bread*, 8. 11; *The Code of Maimonides, Book Three: The Book of Seasons*, trans. Solomon Gandz and Hayman Klein (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1961), 358.

²¹ For the representation of a roasted lamb among the ritual scenes, see the earliest known Haggadah with a prefatory cycle, London, BL, Or. 2737, produced in the late thirteenth century, possibly in Castile or South France (Narkiss, *British Isles*, Cat. No. 9). Here the roasting of the lamb appears on fol. 91v, titled: "This one is preparing the Paschal Lamb". As in the Rylands and the Brother Haggadot, in Or. 2737 this is associated with the Seder table represented in the previous scene on fol. 91r. The slaughtering and skinning of the lamb are seen in the Golden Haggadah (London, BL, Add. 27210, fol. 15r, lower left panel; Bezalel Narkiss, *The Golden Haggadah* (London: British Library, 1997), 48-49). The smearing of the doorpost is peculiar to the Rylands and Brother Haggadot. It is possible that the smearing episode may have represented a local custom commemorating the biblical event. Similar customs were still found in modern Tunisia, where some communities habitually slaughtered a lamb on the day of the thirteenth of Nissan, and one of the family members marked the external walls of the house with the blood, alluding to the marking of the Israelites' houses before the plague of the first born. On the same day, after the search for the leaven, they roasted and ate the lamb (not on the fourteenth day). See Tabori, *Passover Ritual*, 104-105.

blur the distinctions between the biblical scene and their own ceremony by merging the two and creating a seamless sequence of past and present.²²

The continuity between past and present is variously expressed in other haggadot as well. While the Rylands and the Brother manuscripts focus on the Passover event, the Sarajevo Haggadah offers a historical sequence which continues well beyond the events of Exodus. The cycle begins in the book of Genesis and opens with the Creation of the world in six days (Fig. 6).²³ Eve's creation, the Fall and its consequences, the offerings of Cain and Abel, Noah, the Patriarchs, Joseph, Moses, the Exile in Egypt and the Redemption follow. But unlike other haggadot, the biblical cycle in the Sarajevo manuscript does not terminate at this point.²⁴ It goes on to depict the main events experienced by the Israelites in the desert. Special importance is laid on the Giving of the Law, the constitutive event in the formation of the People of Israel, represented here in a full-page miniature

²² Cf., the haggadah text: "In every generation a person is in duty bound to regard himself as having personally participated in the exodus from Egypt."

²³ Sarajevo Haggadah, fols. 1v–2r. For different interpretations of the iconography of these miniatures see Herbert R. Broderick, "Observations on the Creation Cycle of the Sarajevo Haggadah," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 47 (1984), 320–322; Katrin Kogman-Appel and Shulamit Laderman, "The Sarajevo Haggadah: Creation ex Nihilo and the Hermeneutical Concept Behind It," *Studies in Iconography* 25 (2004), 89–128.

²⁴ This is also peculiar in comparison with other haggadot which begin with Genesis rather than with the Exodus story. For a biblical sequence beginning with Genesis scenes and concluding with the Exodus from Egypt, see, e.g., the Golden Haggadah, made in Barcelona in the 1320s (London, BL, Add. 27210, fols. 2v–15r; Narkiss, *Golden Haggadah*, 22–49). This Haggadah includes a wider cycle, opening with Adam naming to the beasts, the creation of Eve and the Original Sin. It continues in a chronological sequence, telling of Noah, the patriarchs and Joseph, and concludes with the Exodus redemption. The last scene in the biblical sequence, the Dance of Miriam and the daughters of Israel, is on the upper right of the last recto (fig. 1). The other three panels on this page do contain not biblical scenes, but rather representations of contemporary Jewish reality. On the upper left, the master of the house, probably the patron of the manuscript, orders *mazot* and *haroset* to be given to the children. On the lower right, women are busy cleaning the house: One brushes the coffered ceiling; another sweeps the floor. On the same panel, a man performs the search for the leaven with a candle and a stick. He is joined by a child who prepares to receive the crumbs into a bowl. On the last panel, the man on the left purifies dishes in boiling water, while two others prepare the lamb for the feast. The three panels visualize the preparations for Passover in a detailed and lively manner, but their location within the cycle reveals the profound meaning of the whole: Biblical historiography, commencing with Adam and Eve, reaches a peak in the Exodus redemption and continues in the present-day Jews of Barcelona, as they make preparations for the feast.



Figure 6. Creation of the world, Sarajevo Haggadah, Crown of Aragón, ca. 1330s/1340s, fol. 2r.

(Fig. 7).²⁵ The following page is composed of two panels, in which are represented Moses blessing the people before his death and transmitting the leadership to Joshua, who had been chosen to oversee the entry into the Promised Land (Fig. 8).²⁶ The final biblical image, representing the Temple, occupies an entire page (Fig. 9).²⁷ Messianic hope is indicated by the inscription under the miniature, which employs the mishnaic idiom: “The Temple that will be constructed soon in our days.”²⁸ In the biblical sequence, however, the miniature represents not only the messianic temple but also the historical temple built while the people of Israel were settled in the Land. Supporting the argument for its place in the historical era is the fact that the Temple does not conclude the cycle but is followed by scenes depicting the present. The next two miniatures show the master of the house, probably the respected and wealthy patron of the manuscript, distributing *mazzot* and *haroset* to those who cannot afford them (Fig. 10),²⁹ thus stressing the individual’s commitment to the community. The importance of the congregation is further emphasized by the final scene of the cycle, another miniature representing a contemporary synagogue, the center of Jewish ritual life (Fig. 11).³⁰ Given that the miniature occupies a full page, it was clearly intended as a parallel to the Temple. A strong connection is made between the open *heikhal* with the Torah scrolls in the synagogue and the Ark of the Covenant exposing the Tablets of Law in the Temple miniature two pages earlier (Fig. 9). This similarity characterizes the synagogue and the Torah scrolls as a direct continuation of the Temple and the Tablets of the Law given to Moses at Sinai in a previous scene, also a full page miniature (Fig. 7). Unlike the empty Temple, however, the synagogue is lively and populated. One man raises his hand to the door of the *heikhal*; several figures are seated beneath the *teiva*, another one stands next to it and a group of adults and children prepares to depart for home.

²⁵ Sarajevo Haggadah, fol. 30r.

²⁶ Sarajevo Haggadah, fol. 31v.

²⁷ Sarajevo Haggadah, fol. 32r.

²⁸ See Mishnah, *Taanit* 4: 8. On the messianic aspect of this miniature, see Sarit Shalev-Eyni, “Jerusalem and the Temple in Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts: Jewish Thought and Christian Influence,” in *L’interculturalità dell’ebraismo*, ed. Mauro Perani (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 2004), 173–191.

²⁹ Sarajevo Haggadah, fol. 33v.

³⁰ Sarajevo Haggadah, fol. 34r.

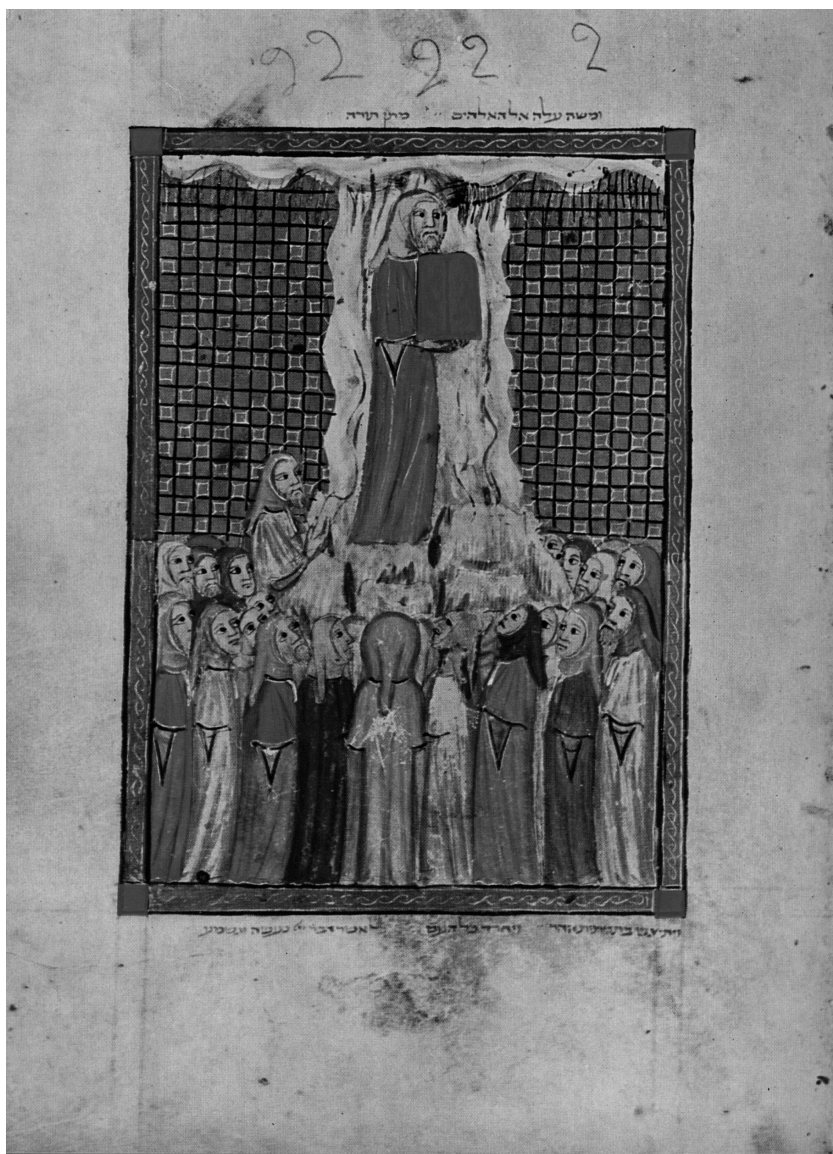


Figure 7. Giving of the Law, Sarajevo Haggadah, fol. 30r.

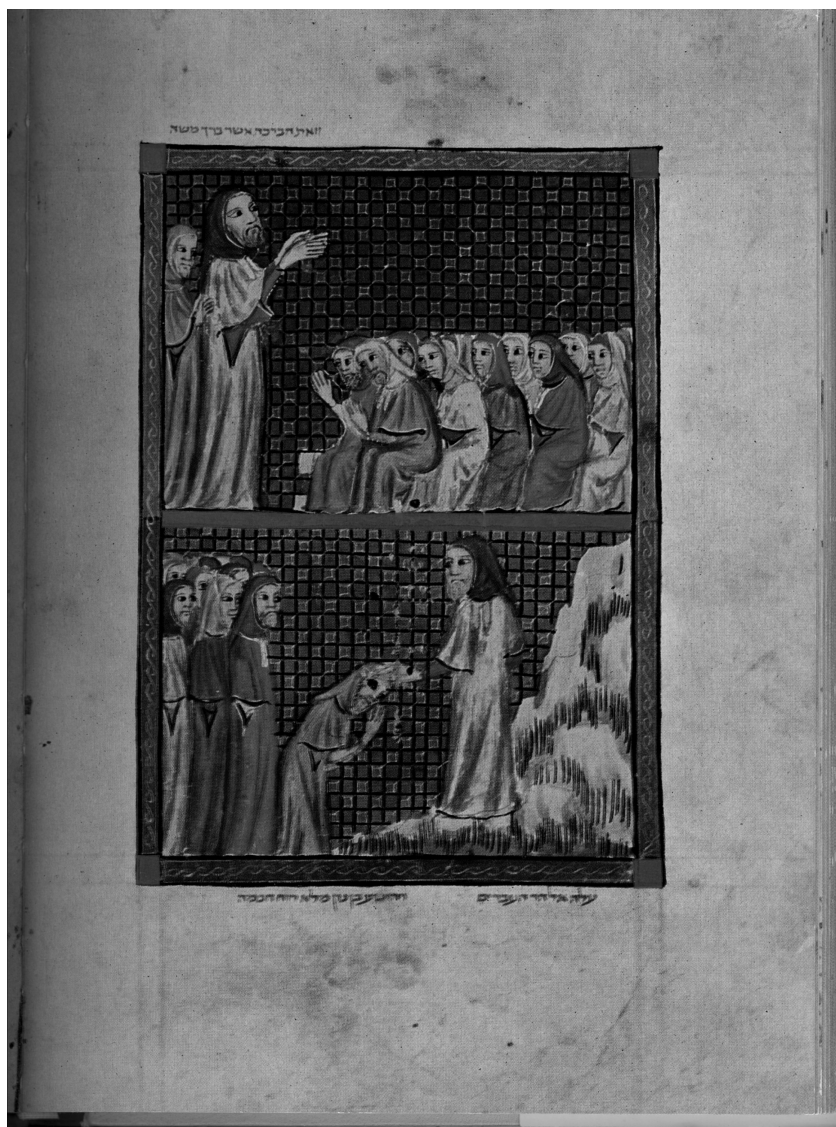


Figure 8. Moses blesses the people before his death/Transmitting the leadership to Joshua, Sarajevo Haggadah, fol. 31v.

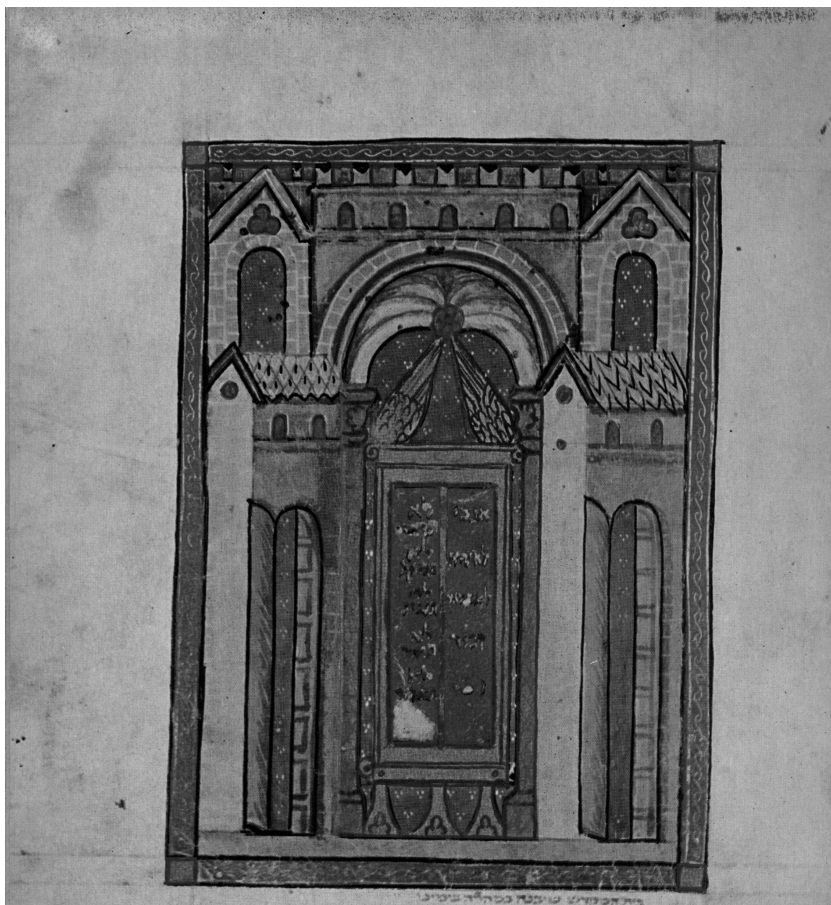


Figure 9. The Temple, Sarajevo Haggadah, fol. 32r.

In actual practice, the opening of the *heikhal*, the focal point of the sacred area, where the scrolls of the Law are housed, would be read by viewers as forming part of the ceremony of taking out and returning the scrolls for the ritual reading of the Torah. An open *heikhal* demands a specific response from the congregation: all those present, as a demonstration of respect, remain standing as long as the doors are open. When the service is concluded the *heikhal* is closed. Given that it is impossible that the artists or designers intended for the group of people represented as leaving the synagogue to be interpreted as doing so while the *heikhal* remained open, it would seem that two separate and sequential episodes are referenced. The

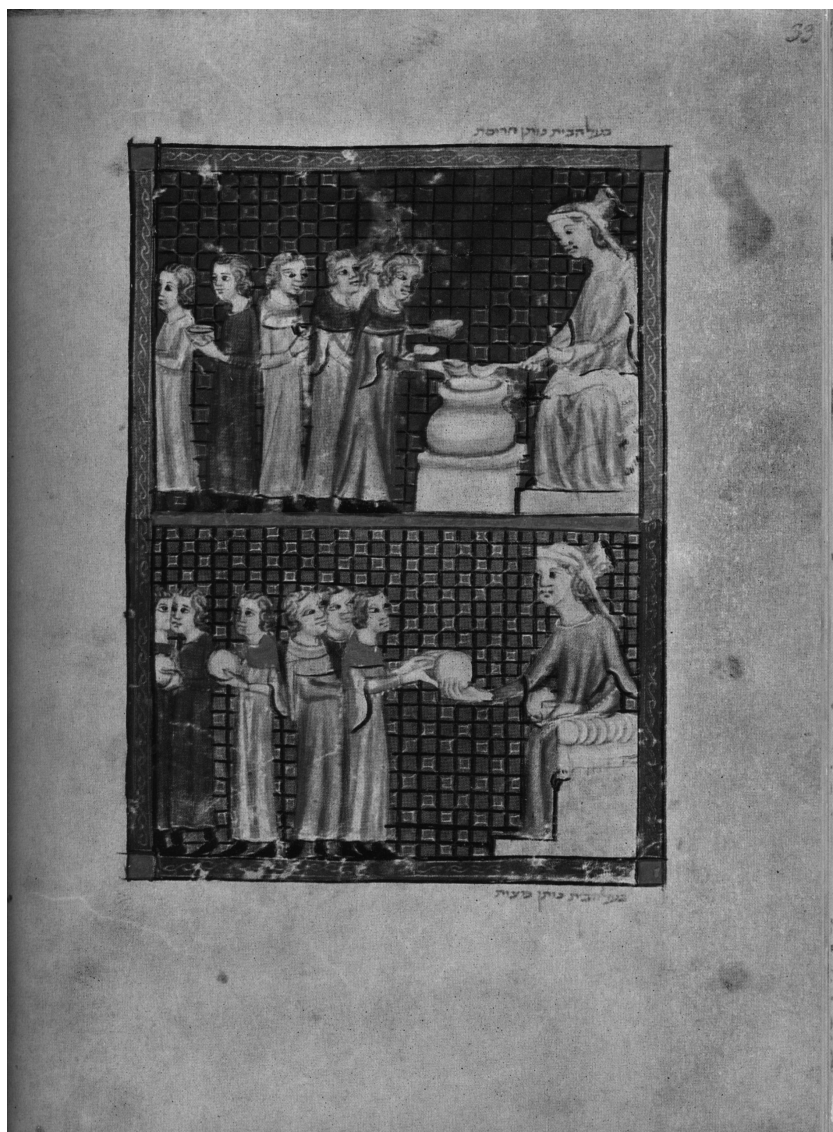


Figure 10. The master of the house distributes *mazzot* and *haroset*, Sarajevo Haggadah, fol. 33v.

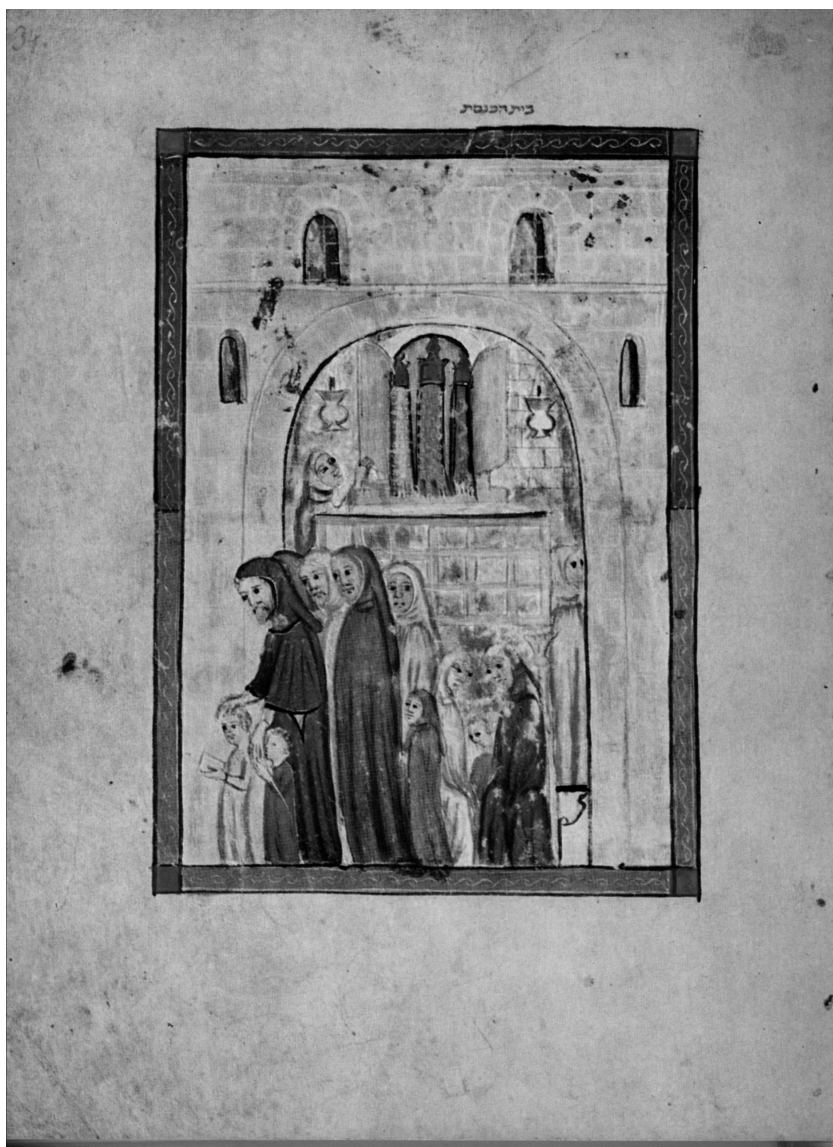


Figure 11. Synagogue, Sarajevo Haggadah, fol. 34r.

first moment represented is the holiest one of a service held in the synagogue: the one in which the Torah scrolls are visible in the open *heikhal*.³¹ The second, a depiction of members of the congregation departing the holy place for their homes after the service is completed, creates a continuity between the public service and the private family ritual, leading directly to the next page, which contains the first words of the haggadah text, the Aramaic instruction, “They are coming from the prayer gathering...” The synagogue, the ritual meeting point of the congregation, constitutes the pivotal image of the entire cycle. It represents a living substitute for the destroyed Temple, with the Torah scrolls in the open *heikhal* forming its essence.

A Local Polemic

Comparison between the cycles displays variants on the common perception of a sequence between the biblical past and the Jews of the fourteenth century. In the different haggadot the scenes from contemporary life are designed in a format similar to that of the biblical ones and are implicitly presented as their direct continuation. Visual distinctions between the two categories of scenes are non-existent, and it is clear that the chronological sequence between them, according to which the Sephardic Jews celebrating the feast are the immediate successors of the biblical period, is intended to be perceived as seamless. I would further suggest that these sequences may have been designed as a response to local currents of anti-Jewish polemic.

As in other European kingdoms, the Jews of Aragón existed in a particularly direct relationship to the Crown: their legal status was that of serfs of the royal treasury, and they were thus subordinated to the king alone. The taxes paid by Jews constituted an important part of the royal treasury, and were used by the court in various ways.³² During the reign of Jaime II (1291–1327), official policy toward the Jews continued to be tolerant, and

³¹ For another interesting interpretation of the open *heikhal* and the figure standing next to it in the context of the Torah Scroll as a magical object, see Shalom Sabar, “Torah and Magic: The Torah Scroll and its Accessories as Magical Objects in Jewish Culture in Europe and in Muslim Countries,” *Pe’amim: Studies in Oriental Jewry*, 85 (2000), 149–179 (152–153) (Hebrew). For earlier bibliography discussing this miniature see Shalom Sabar.

³² David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 27.

this did not change drastically until the massacres of 1391.³³ Nevertheless, by the end of the thirteenth century the Jews of the Crown of Aragón had lost their political power. The first serious signs of decline appeared during the 1320s, when Jewish religious life was significantly threatened. The principle that the Church had no jurisdiction over Jews belonging to the Crown still held, but due both to the intensive activity of the friars and to the Inquisition, it was less consistently enforced than before.³⁴ Thus, despite their relatively prosperous condition, Jews had to confront the friars' accusations with ever-greater frequency.

Among the prominent figures who laid the foundations for local anti-Jewish attitudes was the famous Catalan Dominican friar Raymond Martin (1210/15-1285/90). In his treatise *Pugio fidei*³⁵ which was completed after 1278 and had significant influence on later generations of polemicists, Raymond used his wide knowledge of the Hebrew language and rabbinic sources to support his anti-Jewish arguments and further his mission of converting Jews to Christianity. He draws a sharp distinction between biblical and post-biblical Jews and claims that the rabbinic sages of the Talmud created a new and distorted religion after the death of Christ, deliberately ignoring the numerous Christological proofs in the Bible. As Jeremy Cohen writes, in addition to these two main periods into which Raymond divides the history of the world, it is possible to discern in the *Pugio fidei* a third stage, one which pertained directly to Jews who lived in Raymond's own time, whom he termed *Iudaei moderni* or *Iudaei nostri temporis*. Though this period is not as clearly demarcated as the first do, it is characterized by distinctive features which, for Raymond, signal an additional deterioration.³⁶ Contemporary Jews, says Raymond, preserve the

³³ Yom Tov Assis, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry: Community and Society in the Crown of Aragon, 1213-1327* (London-Portland Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1997), 38-48, 63.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 49-63, esp. 62-63.

³⁵ *Raymundi Martini Ordinis Praedicatorum Pugio fidei adversus Mauros et Iudaeos cum observationibus Josephi de Voisin et introductione Jo. Benedicti Carpzovi, qui simul appendicis loco Hermanni Iudaei opusculum de sua conversione, ex Manuscripto Bibliothecae Paulinae Academiae Lipsiensis recensuit* (Lipsiae: Sumptibus Haeredum Friderici Lanckisi, 1687, reprint, 1967).

³⁶ Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 342-363. For Raymond's account of earlier Christian theology since Augustine's fundamental tolerance of Jewish existence in Christian society and the change in attitude among thirteenth century friars as well as his own innovative elements, see esp. 359-363.

rabbinic alliance with the devil by obstinately observing the commandments of Moses, which had been outlawed by God through Roman decrees.³⁷ Their present ritual therefore reflects not the Law of God but a diabolic cult.³⁸ They not only perpetuate the alliance with the devil by following their Talmudic fathers, but cement it still further by denying the truth of the few Talmudic traditions that validate the teachings of Christianity.³⁹ This perversion has led to the perpetuation of their Exile.⁴⁰

During Raymond's later years in Barcelona, on several occasions he engaged in debate with Rabbi Solomon ben Abraham ibn Adret, known as the Rashba (ca. 1235–1310).⁴¹ Ibn Adret, a student of Nahmanides and a prominent halakhic leader and theologian who lived in Barcelona, is best known for his role in the second phase of the controversy surrounding the writings of Maimonides. His significant role in defending his people against the anti-Jewish polemic of his time, however, is less familiar. Ibn Adret's polemic responses are contained in a collection of commentaries to Talmudic *aggadot* that he wrote about this time. His arguments are organized so as to confront the charge that contemporary Judaism constituted a distortion of the biblical religion, and some comprise specific responses to Raymond Martin's accusations.⁴² Ibn Adret argues that the affliction of long exile is the consequence of the Jews' failure to keep the commandments of Moses, and not of their continued observance of them.⁴³ Practicing Jews, on the other hand, believed that their eternal constancy of the Jews in the observance of the Law as it had been ordained by Moses in the desert constituted proof of the truth of their conception and understanding of the Bible.⁴⁴

³⁷ *Pugio fidei*, 3.1.14.24, p. 461; 3.3.11.25, p. 791; 3.3.21.2, p. 898; Cohen, *Living Letters*, 352–253.

³⁸ *Pugio fidei*, 2.14.24, p. 461, Cohen, *Living Letters*, 353.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

⁴⁰ *Pugio fidei*, 3.3.2.13, p. 654; 3.3.21.15, p. 912; Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 153.

⁴¹ Jeremy Cohen, "The Christian Adversary of Solomon Ibn Adret," *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, n.s. 71 (1980), 48–55.

⁴² Cohen, *Friars and the Jews*, 156–163.

⁴³ Hebrew text, J. Perles, *R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adereth: Sein Leben und seine Schriften nebst handschriftlichen Beilagen* (Breslau: Schletter, 1863), 36–37. Translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

⁴⁴ Hebrew text, Perles, *Salomo b. Abraham b. Adereth*, p. 29.

In this vein, Ibn Adret also attacks Christians who oppose the present practical aspect of some of the commandments and interpret them as symbolic prophecies whose practical aspects were eradicated with the coming of Christ. An excellent example of this sort of polemic is found in his interpretation of the Paschal Lamb:

And one of the precepts that they [the Christians] classify in this category [i.e. the symbolic] is the slaughtering of the Paschal Lamb, which they claim connotes what was happening [i.e. the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross].⁴⁵

Ibn Adret rejects this view by stressing the eternal nature and intention of all the precepts, including this one. Since the Law is constant, no precept can ever be abolished and those which can not be practiced at present because of the conditions imposed by exile will be restored after the reconstruction of the Temple.⁴⁶ Following this declaration of his overall view, he returns to the Paschal Lamb and the celebration of the feast of Passover, quoting verses which validate the perennial perseverance of the ritual:

Indeed, you see that also the commandment of the *Pesah* was ordered for all generations to come, and the same is true concerning the eating of *mazzot*, as it is written: 'And this day shall be unto you for memorial and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever' (Exodus 12: 14). And he said: 'And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt; therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever' (12: 17).⁴⁷

Ibn Adret addresses another attempt by Raymond Martin to assert the expiration of the commandments commemorating the Exodus from Egypt. Raymond employs his usual method of proving his claims through rabbinic writings, quoting a Talmudic passage in an effort to challenge the eternal remembrance of the Exodus redemption:⁴⁸

Ben Zoma said to the Sages: Will the Exodus from Egypt be mentioned in the days of the Messiah? Was it not long ago said (in Jeremiah 23: 7, 8): 'Therefore behold the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say: As the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, as the Lord liveth that brought

⁴⁵ Hebrew text, *ibid.* 35. For Raymond's accusation, *Pugio fidei*, 3. 3. 15. 33, p. 864.

⁴⁶ Hebrew text, Perles, *Salomo b. Abraham b. Adereth*, 35.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Hebrew text, Perles, *Salomo b. Abraham b. Adereth*, 37 and n. 1.

up and that led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country and from all the countries whither I had driven them?’ (Berakhoth 12b)⁴⁹

This, according to Raymond, leads to the conclusion that the Paschal lamb, the eating of *mazzot* and the avoiding of leaven, all associated with the command to remember the Exodus redemption, were nullified with the coming of the Messiah, who, according to Christian doctrine, has already arrived.⁵⁰ In response, Ibn Adret argued that, although the memory of Exodus is mentioned in association with the three commandments of Pass-over, the act of memory is not an integral obligation of their continued viability:⁵¹ like all the commandments, they should be followed in perpetuity. Ibn Adret attempts to establish a historical continuity from the biblical Law to his own days, a sequence whose true strength lies in the constancy of observation and transmission of the Mosaic Law, without variation, from one generation to another:

But, indeed, we the Congregation of Israel, by observing all the commandments in one consistent way, have not deviated from the days of Moses...to Joshua, to the elders to the great assembly, until this very day.⁵²

This sequence of transmission is evidently based on the opening of the tractate entitled *Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers) in the Mishnah: “Moses received the Law from Sinai and committed it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders and the elders to the Prophets; and the Prophets committed it to the men of Great Assembly” (*Avot* 1.1).⁵³ Ibn Adret used the mishnaic source, but omitted the mention of the prophets and added one small, but crucial, component. With the final words “and even today” he attached his own generation to the chain of transmission. In so doing, he may have altered the original source in order to render it an adequate response to Raymond’s attack against that very tradition, as well as the Dominican’s own a chain of transmission, which included Moses, the prophets and the holy Fathers:

⁴⁹ *The Babylonian Talmud*, ed. Isidore Epstein, 27 vols. (London: Soncino, 1935–1948), *Berakoth*, 12b, 72–73.

⁵⁰ For Raymond’s accusation, see *Pugio fidei*, 3. 3. 11, pp. 781–782.

⁵¹ Hebrew text, Perles, *Salomo b. Abraham b. Adereth*, 38–39.

⁵² Hebrew text, Perles, 30, English after Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 159.

⁵³ English, Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), 446 .

These *traditiones*, which they [the Jews] call oral law, they believe and state that God gave to Moses along with the law on Mount Sinai. Then Moses, they say, transmitted them to his disciple Joshua, Joshua to his successors, and so on, until they were committed to writing by the ancient rabbis...

They [Certain Christian *traditiones*] destroy and confound the perfidy of modern Jews, and I do not think that one should question that they successively managed to make their way from Moses and the prophets and the other holy fathers to those who recorded them.⁵⁴ For in no way other than from the prophets and fathers do we think that such things descended...

Presenting a continuous sequence between Biblical times and the present-day existence of Catalanian Jewry as an alternative to this Christian historicist version was also the method adopted by the designers of our haggadot. The cycles deny the Christian distinction between biblical and post-biblical Jews by visually asserting a continuity between the Bible and the *Iudaei moderni* as they celebrate the biblical feast of redemption. According to this visual sequence, the contemporary Jews are the true followers of the glorious biblical past, a link in a chain that has never been broken. As in Ibn Adret's arguments, this visual declaration embodies both the general attitude towards the Law and the specific issue of the celebration of Passover. As in all other aspects of the manuscripts, however, the designer of each visual program articulated these concepts using slightly different iconographies and compositions, resulting in highly individual visualizations of an unbroken connection between the modern present and the biblical past.

In the Rylands and Brother Haggadot (Figs 3-5), the integration of the biblical Paschal lamb with the present custom of the Seder demonstrates the continuous observance of the biblical commandment in a practical and constant way, and in contradiction to its supposedly symbolic meaning as the Sacrifice of Christ. Ibn Adret was very well acquainted with the Christian typological meaning of the event, referring to it as "alluding to what they claimed was happening." Similarly, it is likely that the designers of the Rylands and Brother Haggadot were familiar with visual articulations of the symbolic meaning preferred by Christians. This can be deduced by comparing our scene (Figs 3 and 4) with Christian examples, such as that

⁵⁴ *Pugio fidei*, prooemium, 5-9, pp. 2-4, English translation, Cohen, *The Friars*, 137. In light of this passage, and since the Christians usually cited the prophecies as proofs for the coming of Christ, it seems that Ibn Adret's omission of the Prophets mentioned in tractate *Avot* was not accidental.

found in a Bible Moralisée (Fig. 12).⁵⁵ In each example, there is a close similarity both in the posture of the slaughtered lamb and the round bowl used to collect the blood.⁵⁶ The context, however, elucidates the fundamental difference. The Paschal Lamb in the Christian example appears in association with its typological parallel, the Crucifixion of Christ, while the Jewish lamb is connected to the Seder table. Not only did the illuminator avoid the common Christian typology but, like Ibn Adret, he suppressed its metaphorical meaning by attributing to it a practical validity in the context of the *Seder* ceremony.

In the Sarajevo Haggadah, the expansion of the biblical cycle beyond the story of Exodus enabled the designer to elaborate a broader and clearer visual statement concerning historical continuity, stressing the crucial events associated with the Law and its unbroken transmission: the reception of the Law on Mount Sinai (Fig. 7), the transmission of the mission from Moses to Joshua (Fig. 8) and the construction of the Temple in the land of Israel (Fig. 9). The special importance of the Sinai and Temple scenes is manifested by their distinctive format as full page miniatures. A similar format is assigned to the synagogue miniature at the end of the cycle (Fig. 11). The similarities between the three large miniatures are striking: the common component to all three is the Law. The tablets held

⁵⁵ Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. 2554, f. 20r, lower right medallions; Gerald B. Guest, *Bible Moralisée: Codex Vindobonensis 2554: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek*, Manuscripts in Miniatures 2 (London: Harvey Miller, 1995), 74.

⁵⁶ Kogman-Appel, *Illuminating Haggadot*, 178–179, points out another typological aspect related to the striking of the doorposts of the Israelites' houses with the blood of the Paschal lamb. According to the Christian typological interpretation, the blood was applied in the shape of a T, alluding to the sign of the cross. Those who escaped the plague were therefore identified as those who believed in the cross. The illuminator of the Rylands Haggadah avoided this typological sign. For suggested polemical readings of various scenes in the cycles, see, for example, Kurt Schubert, "Wikkuach-Thematik in den Illustrationen hebräischer Handschriften," *Jewish Art* 12–13 (1986–1987), 247–256 (250–254); Marc Michael Epstein, *Dreams of Subversion in Medieval Jewish Art and Literature* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 16–17, 27; idem, "Another Flight into Egypt: Confluence, Coincidence, the Cross-Cultural Dialectics of Messianism and Iconographic Appropriation in Medieval Jewish and Christian Culture," in: *Imagining the Self, Imagining the Other: Visual Representation and Jewish-Christian Dynamics in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period*, ed. Eva Frojmovic (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 33–52. For the decorated *mazzah* typical of illuminated Sephardic haggadot as a possible case study for Jewish acculturation, affirmation of Jewish identity and defense against a hostile Christian majority, see Michael Batterman, "Bread of Affliction, Emblem of Power: The Passover Matzah in haggadah Manuscripts from Christian Spain," in *Imagining the Self*, 53–89.

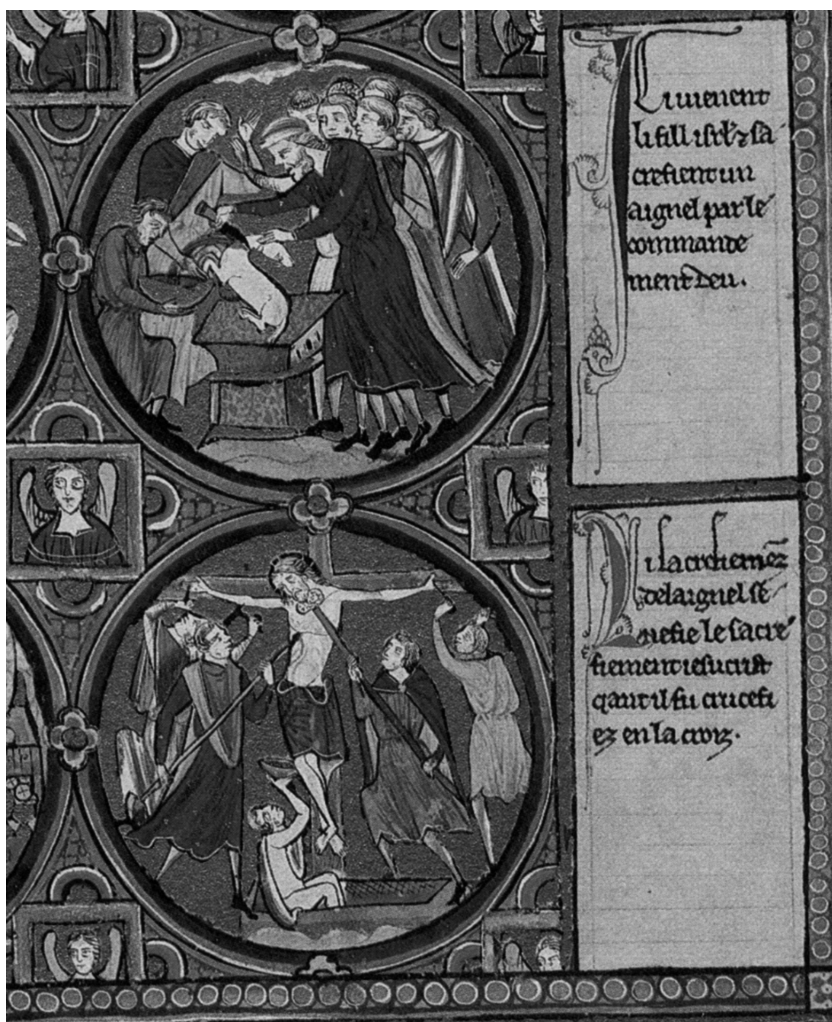


Figure 12. The Paschal lamb/the Crucifixion, *Bible Moralisée*, Paris, ca. 1220s/1230s; Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. 2554, fol. 20r, lower right medallions.

by Moses on Mount Sinai in the center of the composition (Fig. 7) reappear in the center of the Temple (Fig. 9) and are finally echoed in the Torah scrolls in the open *heikhal* of the synagogue (Fig. 11). All three directly represent the principal point of contention in the polemical exchange I have outlined in the preceding pages, that of the continuous existence and validity of the Mosaic Law from biblical times to the present day, as

declared by Ibn Adret: “Indeed, we the Congregation of Israel, by observing all the commandments in one consistent way, have not deviated from the days of Moses... to Joshua... and even today.”⁵⁷

Christian Psalters and Jewish Haggadot

The pictorial cycles of the haggadot exist in opposition not only to the Christian stereotype of Judaism, but also to Christianity’s version of its own history. Study of the Christian manuscripts that almost certainly inspired the designers of the haggadot to include a prefatory cycle of miniatures illustrates this point. As Bezalel Narkiss observed, this format did not originate with Jewish designers but rather was adopted as a result of their contact with Christian books and book production.⁵⁸ A cycle of biblical miniatures preceding a liturgical text without directly referring to the contents of that text is typical of twelfth and thirteenth century Psalters.⁵⁹ The Psalms, songs of praise attributed to King David, formed the core of the daily canonical hours in the church. The 150 Psalms, accompanied by additional liturgical passages and chants, were recited in full over the week. From the late twelfth century through the final quarter of the thirteenth, when it was gradually superseded by the Book of Hours, a Psalter comprising a Calendar and the complete Psalms with Canticles, Litany and Collects was the private prayer book most commonly used among Christian clergy and laity.⁶⁰

As in the later haggadot, in the psalters, the prefatory illuminated cycles, which Leroquais termed *préfaces du psautier* (literally, prefaces to the psalter),

⁵⁷ See above, n. 52.

⁵⁸ Narkiss, *Golden Haggadah* (1997), 55. This view has been also accepted in subsequent scholarship. See Kogman-Appel, *Illuminating Haggadot*, 228.

⁵⁹ For the illuminated psalter see Victor Leroquais, *Les psautiers manuscrits latins des bibliothèques publiques de France*, 3 vols. (Mâcon: Protat frères, Imprimeurs-Éditeurs, 1940–1941); Robert G. Calkins, *Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983), 207–225. For the liturgical structure of the psalter, see also Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office: A Guide to their Organization and Terminology* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 224–237.

⁶⁰ Adelaide Bennett, “The Transformation of the Gothic Psalter in Thirteenth-Century France,” in: *The Illuminated Psalter: Studies in the Content, Purpose and Placement of its Images*, ed. F. O. Büttner (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 211–221. For the continuity of the tradition in the fourteenth century, albeit to a significantly reduced extent, see e.g. Leroquais, *Les psautiers*, 1: LXXIX.

added an important dimension to the liturgical text.⁶¹ The earliest known example, an Anglo-Saxon psalter from Winchester dating to the mid-eleventh century, includes scenes from the lives of David and Christ,⁶² which served to typologically justify the Christian liturgical use of a book from the Old Testament attributed to King David, through their visual substantiation of David's characterization as a type of Christ. During the twelfth century, the prefatory cycle became typical of English psalters and, as they gradually expanded, variations were developed.⁶³ One of the most elaborate examples is a sumptuous psalter produced in Canterbury around 1200, today in Paris.⁶⁴ The manuscript reached Catalonia shortly after its production, and in 1340 some newly written and illuminated pages were attached to it by local scribes and artists working together in a Catalan workshop. At this time, the well-known Catalan painter Ferrer Bassa added color to some of the English artist's drawings, which had been left unpainted.⁶⁵ Comparison of the selection of biblical scenes belonging to the original cycle of the psalter with the later haggadot reveals significant similarities. As did the designer of the much later Sarajevo Haggadah (Fig. 6), the English artist opened the series with a representation of the creation of the world in a set of medallions (Fig. 13).⁶⁶ The cycle of the Canterbury-Catalan psalter continues with the Creation of Eve, using an iconography later adopted in several haggadot; the Original Sin; the Expulsion; and the lives of the Patriarchs, Joseph, Moses, Samuel and David (fols. 1v–2v). With the exception of the representations of Samuel and David, the selection of Old Testament scenes in the Canterbury-Catalan psalter is similar to that of the later haggadot. At this point, however, the similarity ends. While in the haggadot the biblical scenes are followed by

⁶¹ Leroquais, *Les psautiers*, 1: LXXXVII–LXXXIX.

⁶² London, BL Ms. Cotton, Tib. C. VI; Elżbieta Temple, *Anglo Saxon Manuscripts 900–1066*, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles 2 (London: Harvey Miller, 1976), Cat. No. 98.

⁶³ C. M. Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts 1066–1190*, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles 3 (London: Harvey Miller, 1975), 17.

⁶⁴ Paris, BnF ms. lat. 8846; *The Great Canterbury Psalter (Anglo-Catalan Psalter)*, I–II: Facsimile and Commentary, ed. Manuel Moleiro (Barcelona: Moleiro, 2004).

⁶⁵ Rosa Alcoy i Pedrós, “Les illustrations recyclées du *Psautier Anglo-Catalan* de Paris: du douzième siècle anglais à l’italianisme pictural de Ferrer Bassa,” in: *Manuscripts in Transition; Recycling Manuscripts, Texts and Images: Proceedings of the International Congress held in Brussels (5–9 November 2002)*, ed. B. Dekeyser and J. van der Stock (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2005), 81–92.

⁶⁶ Sarajevo Haggadah, fols. 1v–2r.

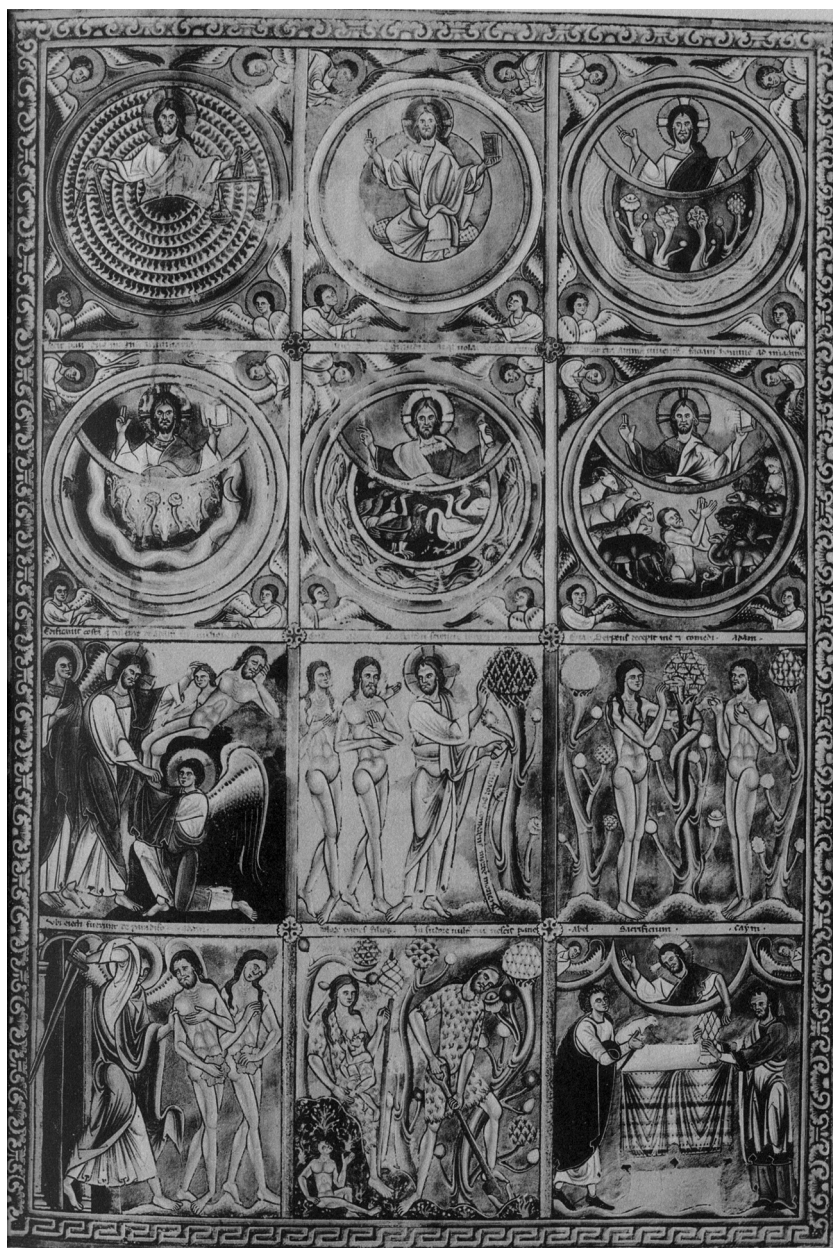


Figure 13. Canterbury-Catalan Psalter, Canterbury, ca. 1200/Catalonia, ca. 1340, Paris, BnF, ms. lat. 8846, fol. 1r.

the Sephardic *Iudaei moderni*, in the Christian precedent they are followed by scenes from the New Testament, concentrating on the life of Christ (fols. 3r–3v). A full-page miniature with a variation on the Tree of Jesse displays the genealogical connections between the Old and New Testaments (fol. 4r). The central series represents, from the ground up, the busts of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, the Virgin and Christ. They are flanked by the busts of prophets and apostles, six on each side. The employment of a variant of this Christian visual tradition, conceived to connect Old Testament types with New Testament history, in the Jewish context of the haggadot thus carries a potential polemical aspect. Through deliberate visual allusions to the Christian model, the designers of the haggadot may have specifically construed their prefatory cycles as a response or an alternative to the Christian historiographic sequence, declaring that the direct followers of the biblical Jews are the local *Iudaei moderni* and not Christ and his disciples, who distorted the original meaning of the Bible.

By 1200, the original production date of the Canterbury-Catalan Psalter, the psalter was the text most commonly treated with elaborate illumination among English manuscripts.⁶⁷ The prefatory cycle of the most richly illuminated examples was based on a precedent already established in the mid-twelfth century in the Psalter of Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester.⁶⁸ This precedent includes scenes from both the Old and the New Testaments, with the addition of the Tree of Jesse, Christ in Majesty and the Virgin and Child.⁶⁹ Like the mid-twelfth-century example, some of these late- twelfth and early-thirteenth century-cycles concluded with the

⁶⁷ Nigel Morgan, *Early Gothic Manuscripts [I] 1190–1250*, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles 4 (London: Harvey Miller and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 15.

⁶⁸ London, British Library, MS Cotton, Nero C. IV; Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts*, Cat. No. 78.

⁶⁹ For examples of prefatory cycles including scenes from both the Old and New Testaments, see the Psalter in Leiden (Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, MS lat. 76A), Northern England, ca. 1190–1200, with 23 full page miniatures, 8 of which represent Old Testament scenes (Morgan, *Early Gothic Manuscripts*, Cat. No. 14); the Munich Psalter, Oxford, ca. 1200–1210, with 86 miniatures, 46 of which represent Old Testament scenes (Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 835, *ibid.*, Cat. No. 23); the Huntingfield Psalter, Oxford, ca. 1210–1220, with 40 miniatures, 22 of which represent Old Testament scenes (New York, PML, MS M. 43, *ibid.*, Cat. No. 30); Trinity Psalter, London, 1220–1230, 10 miniatures, 4 of which represent Old Testament scenes, perhaps part of a larger series, bound out of order (Cambridge, Trinity College MS B. II. 4; *ibid.*, Cat. No. 51).

Last Judgment.⁷⁰ The miniatures, usually full-page, were not generally divided into twelve compartments as in the Canterbury-Catalan psalter, but rather into two horizontal panels; prominent scenes or themes were given a whole page. This arrangement was later adopted by the illuminators of the Rylands, the Brother, the Sarajevo, and other Sephardic haggadot. The same format also reached France already in the late twelfth century. There the tradition of the Psalter with a prefatory cycle flourished during the first three quarters of the thirteenth century among royalty, nobility and wealthy bourgeoisie as a private devotional book.⁷¹ France is another possible channel of transmission of this common tradition to Aragón and Catalonia.

As in England, the prefatory cycle of the French manuscripts developed into different versions, including Old and New Testament scenes or only one of the two categories, according to the patron's intention and wishes.⁷² The mid-twelfth-century English version, including scenes from the two Testaments connected by the Tree of Jesse, with the addition of representations of the Virgin and the Last Judgment, was adopted in some royal French examples.⁷³ Among these are the Psalter of Queen Ingeborg, the wife of Philip Augustus, dating to 1200–1210,⁷⁴ and the so-called Psalter

⁷⁰ See, for example, the Munich and the Trinity Psalters, n. 69. For the mid-twelfth-century precedent see the Psalter of Henry of Blois, fols. 31r–39r, n. 68. The association of the Psalter and the Last Judgment appears as early as the tenth century, in the Anglo-Saxon Aethelstan Psalter, MS Cotton Galba A XVIII. See Morgan, *Early Gothic Manuscripts*, 16. For the tradition of the inclusion of the Last Judgment in prefatory cycles of illuminated psalters, see Yves Christe, *Jugements derniers* (Saint-Leger-Vauban: Zodiaque, 1999), 113–141.

⁷¹ See Bennett, “Transformation of the Gothic Psalter”.

⁷² For an extraordinary royal example with a prefatory cycle with Old Testament scenes only, see the famous St. Louis Psalter: Harvey Stahl, *Picturing Kingship: History and Painting in the Psalter of Saint Louis* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2007).

⁷³ Traces of this tradition in France already appear in a late-twelfth-century Psalter-Hymnal made in Amiens (Amiens, Bibliothèque municipale, ms 19). See Leroquais, *Les psautiers*, 1: Cat. No. 5; Walter Cahn, *Romanesque Manuscripts: The Twelfth Century*, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in France (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), 1: Cat. No. 136. Though the Tree of Jesse is absent, most, though not all, of the other components appear. The prefatory seven miniatures include the Creation of Eve, the Fall, the Martyrdom of Thomas Becket (scenes of martyrdom are paralleled in some English examples), four scenes from the life of Christ and the Last Judgment.

⁷⁴ Chantilly, Musée Condé, Ms. 1965; Florens Deuchler, *Der Ingeborgpsalter* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1967); *Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Originalformat der Handschrift Psautier d'Ingeborg de Danemark = Ingeborgpsalter: MS. 9 olim 1695, aus dem Besitz des*

of Blanche of Castile, dating to around 1230.⁷⁵ The selection of scenes in the two cycles is not identical, but they represent a similar historical view. The twenty-two full-page miniatures of the Psalter of Blanche of Castile begin with the fall of the rebellious angels (f. 9v), and continue with five scenes of Adam and Eve (fols. 10r, 11v, 12r), Noah's Ark and Abraham's Sacrifice (f. 13v). The Old Testament cycle ends with the Giving of the Law and the Worshipping of the Golden Calf (f. 14). This conclusion represents a well-known Christian perception: Moses received the Law from the Lord on Sinai but, through their idolatrous behavior, the Israelites proved that they did not deserve it and brought about the termination of the Law and its replacement by the New Covenant.⁷⁶ This historical shift is depicted in the following scenes of the First Coming of Christ.⁷⁷ A similar perception is represented in the opening cycle of the Ingeborg Psalter. Here, only four of the twenty-seven folios contain scenes from the Old Testament: both Abraham (fols. 10v-11r) and Moses (fols. 12v-13r) are distributed among four panels across two folios. The Moses scenes concentrate on the receiving and losing of the Law: in the first (f. 12v, lower panel), Moses, followed by Aaron and the people, receives the Tablets from the

Musée Condé, Chantilly, ed. Florens Deuchler (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1985), and more recently, Kathleen Schowalter "The Ingeborg Psalter: Queenship, Legitimacy, and the Appropriation of Byzantine Art in the West," in: *Capetian Women* (The New Middle Ages), ed. Kathleen Nolan, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 99-136, with additional bibliography.

⁷⁵ Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, ms. 1186. For the complete contents of the prefatory cycle, see Henry Martin, *Psautier de Saint Louis et de Blanche de Castille*, Les Joyaux de l'Arsenal I (Paris: Imprimerie Berthaud Frères, 1909); Leroquais, *Les psautiers manuscrits* II, Cat. No. 255.

⁷⁶ For the Christian attitude, see Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA, 1974), 574-575; Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 165-175. For further discussion and the Jewish response see the third chapter of Sarit Shalev-Eyni, *Jews among Christians: A Hebrew School of Illumination of the Lake Constance Region* (Turnhout: Brepols and London: Harvey Miller, 2009, in press).

⁷⁷ Tree of Jesse (fol. 15v) Annunciation/Visitation (fol. 16), Nativity/Annunciation to the Shepherds (fol. 17v) Epiphany/Presentation in the Temple (fol. 18), Flight into Egypt/Massacre of the Innocents (fol. 19v), Baptism/First Temptation of Christ (fol. 20r), Resurrection of Lazarus/Entry to Jerusalem (fol. 21v), the Washing of the Feet/Last Supper (fol. 22r), Judah's Kiss/Christ's Arrest (fol. 23v), Crucifixion/Deposition (fol. 24r), Resurrection/Holy Women at the Sepulchre/Descent into Limbo (fol. 25v), *Noli me tangere*/Incredulity of Thomas (fol. 26r), Ascension/Pentecost (fol. 27v), Christ in Majesty (fol. 28r), Coronation of the Virgin/Death of the Virgin (fol. 29v).

hand of the Lord, which emerges from a cloud in the upper right corner of the panel (Fig. 14, lower panel).⁷⁸ The second scene, on the opposite page, represents the Israelites adoring the Golden Calf (Fig. 15, upper panel).⁷⁹ The use of a similar composition for both scenes reinforces the severity of the transgression: the people on the left worship a calf standing in the upper right corner on a high altar, which constitutes an allusion to the tablets in a similar location in the previous scene. The last scene of the Old Testament cycle, in the lower panel of the same page, illustrates the consequences of the transgression (Fig. 15): on the left, Moses lifts up the tablets in order to fling them down.⁸⁰ This act not only visualizes the biblical event (Exodus, 32: 15–19) but also symbolizes the destiny of the Old Law: the Old Testament cycle concludes at this point and is followed by the New Testament cycle represented in the following folios.⁸¹

A comparison between the Sarajevo Haggadah and both the Ingeborg Psalter and the Psalter of Blanche of Castile reveals their ideological differences.⁸² Although the meanings are opposed, in all the three the Giving of the Law is construed as a constitutive event, and is assigned a prominent place in each cycle of miniatures (Figs. 7, 14). Whereas for the designers of the two Christian Psalters the scene is followed by the collective sin that brought about the end of the Law (Figs. 15 and 16), for the illuminator of

⁷⁸ Inscribed: “*si come moyses ala gerre les tables dela loi*”, Deuchler, *Der Ingeborgpsalter*, 31

⁷⁹ Inscribed: *si come ses pueples fist en dementres le ueel pur aorer*, *ibid.*

⁸⁰ Inscribed: *si come moyses peccio les tables*, *ibid.*, 32.

⁸¹ Tree of Jesse (fol. 14v); Annunciation/Visitation/Nativity of Christ (fol. 15r), Annunciation to the Shepherds/Presentation in the Temple (fol. 16v), The Magi before Herod/Adoration of the Magi (fol. 17r), Massacre of the Innocents/Flight into Egypt (fol. 18v), Baptism of Christ/Temptation (fol. 19r), Transfiguration (fol. 20v), John 8, 10–11 (fol. 21r), Resurrection of Lazarus, Entry to Jerusalem (fol. 22v), Last Supper/the Washing of the Feet (fol. 23r), Christ on the Mount of Olives/the Sleeping Apostles (fol. 24v), the Betrayal/Christ before Pilate (fol. 25r), Flagellation/Way to Calvary (fol. 26v); Crucifixion/Deposition (fol. 27r), Entombment/Holy Women at the Sepulchre (fol. 28v), Descent into Limbo/*Noli me tangere* (fol. 29r), Journey to Emmaus/Mary Magdalen and the Apostles (fol. 30v), Incredulity of Thomas/Ascension (fol. 31r), Pentecost (fol. 32v), Last Judgment (fol. 33r), Christ and the Virgin on the heavenly throne, Death of Mary (fol. 34v); the legend of Theophilus (fols. 35v–36r).

⁸² Although there is no evidence that the designers of the Sarajevo Haggadah or any other of the Sephardic haggadot knew any of these examples, it is reasonable to assume that they were familiar with similar manuscripts belonging to the same common tradition. In any event, this comparison does not propose that any specific psalter served as a direct model to the designers of the Sarajevo Haggadah. Rather, it is made in order to bring out the similarity of design as opposed to divergence of purpose.

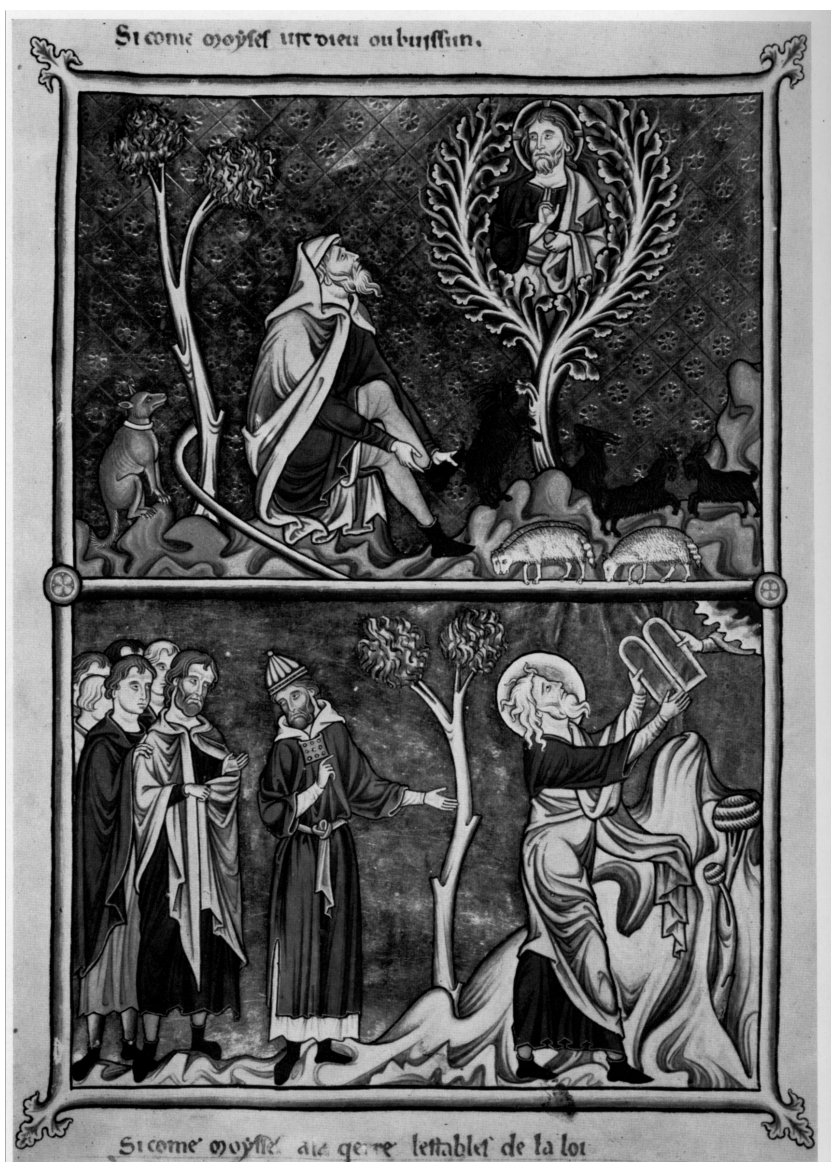


Figure 14. Moses before the Burning Bush/Giving of the Law, Ingeborg Psalter, Noyon(?), ca. 1200-1210; Chantilly, Musée Condé, Ms. 1965, fol. 12v.

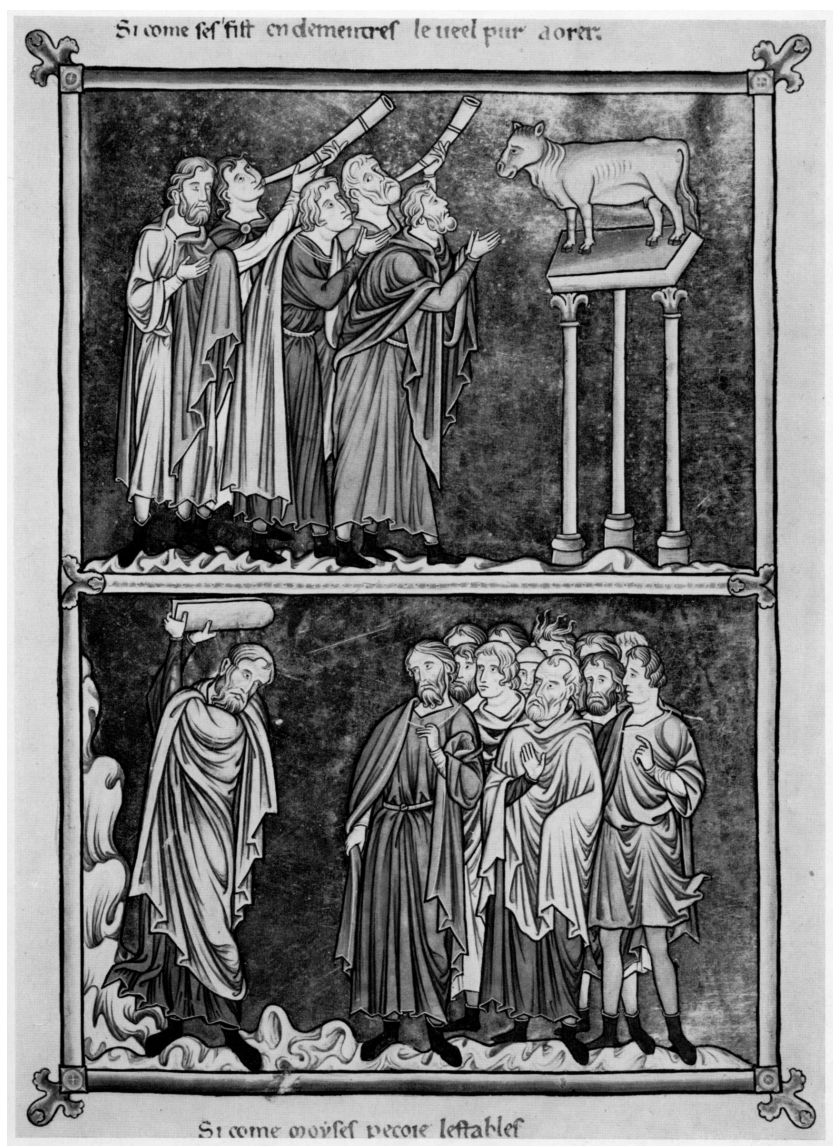


Figure 15. Adoring of the Golden Calf/Breaking of the Tablets, Ingeborg Psalter, fol. 13r.



Figure 16. Annunciation/Visitation/Nativity, Ingeborg Psalter, fol. 15r.

the Sarajevo Haggadah, the reception of the Law is only the beginning. It is the first of three scenes, each of which occupies a full page (Figs 7, 9, 11), and represents the starting point of a chain of transmission that is still carried on and preserved by modern Jews.

Each of these Christian and Jewish prefatory cycles also articulates a vision of the future: the Ingeborg Psalter dedicates a full-page miniature to the Last Judgment, placed at the end of the Christological cycle (Fig. 17). The Psalter of Blanche of Castile includes three full-page images at the end of the prefatory cycle which depict the eschatological end of times in detail: the preaching of Elijah and Enoch and their death; the death of the Anti-Christ (fol. 168r); the Resurrection of the Souls and the Last Judgment (fol. 169v), following which the righteous are received into the Bosom of Abraham while the wicked burn in hell (fol. 171v). Compared with these two psalters, the Sarajevo Haggadah represents an entirely different vision: the Temple that, according to the inscription, “will be constructed soon in our days” (Fig. 9). The Christian and Jewish manuscripts not only represent different views of the future,⁸³ but also different perceptions of the present. While the Christian manuscripts place the eschatological future as the culmination of the cycle, the Hebrew Haggadah locates the Temple as part of the biblical past and before the scenes of contemporary Jewish life. The Temple, according to Jewish belief and the inscription accompanying the miniature, will be rebuilt in the messianic era; meanwhile, the cycle culminates in the present Jewish patron and his community, in the celebration of the biblical feast by the *Iudaei nostri temporis*.

The prefatory cycles of the Sephardic haggadot discussed in this paper constitute visual incarnations of a particularly Jewish historicist view, which is also reflected in contemporary written sources produced in the same geo-cultural context. Despite their clearly polemical intention, one which reflects the tension between the Jewish minority and the friars, these cycles point to the deep integration of Jewish designers and patrons within local Christian society. Figurative and narrative art was a Christian language that the Sephardic Jews adopted from their neighbors towards the end of the thirteenth century, the beginning of the Sephardic illuminated haggadot.⁸⁴ The format of a ritual text preceded by an illuminated cycle

⁸³ See Shalev-Eyni, “Jerusalem and the Temple”.

⁸⁴ The earliest is London, BL, Or. 2737, a late-thirteenth-century haggadah attributed to Castile or southern France. For a detailed description of both the prefatory cycle and the entire manuscript, see Narkiss, *British Isles*, Cat. No. 9.



Figure 17. Last Judgment, Ingeborg Psalter, fol. 33r.

was a Christian innovation that reached Spain *via* England and France. At that time private patronage of illuminated liturgical and devotional manuscripts was widespread in European urban centers. Sumptuous manuscripts fulfilled the devotional requirements of their owners, while also serving as signs of status. Jewish patronage of illuminated haggadot might be seen as constituting a particular manifestation of this phenomenon.⁸⁵ Although some of the Sephardic haggadot contain *piyyutim* intended for public recitation in the synagogue, the Spanish haggadah was first and foremost a private liturgical book intended to be used mainly within the family circle. As such, it not only provided the textual basis for devotion or ritual, but also offered the believer an ideological presentation of those rituals, their history and their contemporary significance. Indeed, both Hebrew haggadot and Latin psalters with illuminated prefatory cycles placed the liturgical text and the ritual it represented within a broad historical context. The believer, through recitation of the text and performance of the ritual, constituted a link in a continuous chain, becoming heir to a particularly construed biblical past, either directly, as in the Jewish view, or through the New Testament, according to the Christian belief. In performing the ritual service, the individual fulfilled his role in a divine historical scheme, visually outlined in his or her book. Therefore, despite their opposing contents, the haggadot and psalters examined in this study reveal that Jews and Christians shared a similar historicist approach, albeit one which found radically different expression in the texts and images particular to each context.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ For Jewish patronage as a branch of a general trend in the early fourteenth century in other European centers, see my book, *Jews among Christians*.

⁸⁶ In this context of a shared historicist approach, it is interesting to consult recent research by Ram Ben Shalom, which demonstrates that, between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries Sephardic Jews, basing themselves on Christian texts, adopted a parallel historicist attitude towards Christians to that adopted by Christians to Jews (discussed above), distinguishing between the original Christianity before Constantine and the false Christianity developed since his time. See Ram Ben-Shalom, *Facing Christian Culture: Historical Consciousness and Images of the Past among the Jews of Spain and Southern France during the Middle Ages* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2006), esp. 147–207, 208–250.

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